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Barry Carpenter:

I am writing to express my interest in knowing more about the Country-of-Origin labeling. This issue on labeling has been evident for many years and it involves many people such as farmers, buyers and consumers. The controversy of this Country-of-Origin labeling is whether to track U.S. born animals or just keep track of foreign animals that enter the country, and if the labeling is truly beneficial.

As a consumer, I feel it would be very advantageous to my health to include this information regarding the origin of livestock in order to buy the most fresh and illness free meat. I also believe that the origin should be included no matter where the animal is born. It does not seem justifiable to only label foreign animal meat. Since I am spending money buying this product, I expect to see all the information that is available to me. I realize this labeling may be added expenses, but if consumers are willing to pay for these expenses, it should be included. This labeling could very well profit the retailers as well since the consumers will be more satisfied knowing the exact origin. To my understanding, labeling would only be profitable, even if only by small amounts, if consumers buy domestic products rather than imported products but lose profit if they prefer imported. If the costs outweigh the benefits of labeling then it might not be that helpful.

I think that if the public was more informed about Country-of-Origin they could then decide for themselves what kind of labeling they prefer. If they prefer the labeling, no matter what the added expenses are, they should be able to obtain that information. I strongly urge the USDA to make the public more aware of this labeling because I do not believe they know a lot about this issue. I also encourage the USDA to inform the public more because it could truly benefit the retailers. Making the consumers more satisfied with their commodities will encourage them to purchase more of that product. I would appreciate if you could give me more information about Country-of-Origin labeling including the positive aspects as well as the negative aspects.

Erin Zak

*Erin Zak*